

period of national glory in the history of Kashmir. It was a period when the valley of Kashmir had its own rulers. During Sultan Shihab-ud-din's reign, the Kashmiris extended the boundaries of India right upto Gazni, Qandhar, and Badakshan³³. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin (1420-1470) was undoubtedly the greatest ruler in the history of Kashmir for having ushered benevolent rule for the people. Due to our love and affection for him, we still call him—Badshah or the great king. He was honoured with the appellation of *Narayanavtara* by the Kashmiris³⁴. During the Sultanate, the Kashmiris evolved a new humanistic philosophy known as the *Rishi* Order, founded by the great patron saint of Kashmir, Hazrat Shaikh Noor-ud-din Wali³⁵. These *Sufis* played an important role as preachers of love, justice, social reform and Islam. These *Rishis*, who belonged to various faiths, were the harbingers of secularism, world brotherhood and peace and it is due to them that the Kashmiris have remained tolerant in their outlook and behaviour throughout the centuries.

The Sultans of Kashmir were great builders but with the passage of time, nothing remains of their works except the tomb of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin's mother, the tomb of Sayed Mohamad Madni and the *Khangah* of Shah Hamdan. They gave to the world, what is known as the wooden architecture of Kashmir, which has a distinct style of its own³⁶.

It was during the period of the Sultans, that arts and crafts for which the valley has attained world fame, were introduced. The weaving of the shawls, the wood work and the papier-machi were brought to Kashmir from the Central Asian region. Some of the Sultans like Badshah, Hassan Shah and Yousaf Shah were great patrons of music and now, the *santoor* and *sofiyana* and the *rouf* has become synonymous with Kashmir.

The Mughals, though conquerors of Kashmir, added to our cultural heritage in the shape of various Mughal gardens around the Dal Lake and at various places in the valley. It was due to the Mughals that the ancient glory of Kashmir, as the paradise on earth, was restored³⁷. They were the great

patrons of learning and it was during their period that *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, an authoritative work on comparative religions was compiled by Mulla Mohsin Fani. The greatest of the Persian poets of Kashmir, Mulla Tahir Ghani composed his world famous *Divan* in the middle of the 17th century.

It was due to the progressive and secular thinking of the Kashmiris that they joined the freedom struggle without any distinction of caste, creed and colour. Since pre-historic times, Kashmir has been a meeting ground of many a varied and rich cultures. While absorbing new ideas, the Kashmiris on their own part have created a mixed and composite culture which is tolerant, humane and kind at the same time. Such a happy blending of cultures is peculiar to the valley only and has influenced them upto the present times in their outlook on every day affairs and problems³⁸. Our composite culture which is Buddhist, Shaivist and Islamic at the same time is the hall-mark of the Kashmiris and we are proud of it.

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APPENDIX

The Kashmir Council of Research wish to underline the importance of the rich and great cultural heritage enshrined in the vast source materials available in Kashmir for purposes of research and learning.

The Council is of a firm opinion that three decades having elapsed since independence, time has come when vigorous and concerted efforts should be undertaken now to delve deep into the treasures of art and culture of our State.

Patronage of State Government :

The Council would therefore like to impress upon the State Government the necessity of provision of financial support, rewards and pensions to persons engaged in historical research, cultural activity, literary work and scientific exploration. Such financial support and rewards were forthcoming from Imperial Treasuries under royal patronage in pre-Independence period. Now that popular regimes have emerged in post-Independence era it is in the fitness of things that such patronage should be forth-coming from the popular Governments.

Allocation of Funds :

The Council appeals to the State Government to allocate specific funds for scientific research, cultural and historical studies and research without further loss of time, as we have to make up for a serious time-lag of about 30 years in this important field of development in art, history, culture and literature. Such a gesture on the part of the Government would be viewed by the Council with profound gratitude ;

loyalty to the cause of honest endeavours to dig into our past culture and heritage with a view to help build a bright, prosperous future ; towards which we can look forward with a sense of pride and honour, should be our aim.

Microfilming of Manuscripts :

The Council brings it to the notice of the Government that a vast store of old and rare manuscripts are scattered all over the State in custody of Government, educational and other institutions as well as private individuals. These manuscripts constitute our precious heritage and national treasure, which require to be preserved on scientific lines. It is sad that uptill now, no arrangements have been made for their microfilming and proper preservation. It may be recalled that it was in 1949 that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, then Prime Minister of the State purchased a microfilming camera from France. Since then many Education Ministers have come and gone but no one has cared to get these manuscripts either microfilmed or photostated. The Council demands of the Ministry of Education to make necessary arrangements of staff and apparatus for the purchase and have the necessary microfilming etc. done promptly.

Return of manuscripts by National Archives, New Delhi

The Council notes with concern that our precious heritage in the shape of manuscripts in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and especially the world famous Gilgit manuscripts were sent to the National Archives, New Delhi, for repair and binding at time of tribal raids, but these have not been returned so far. The Council demands that these manuscripts be got back and work re-started on the editing of the Gilgit manuscripts.

Department of Buddhism ;

It is reiterated that as the Mahayana Buddhism originated from Greater Kashmir, there is need to start a research wing on Kashmir Buddhism at the University of Kashmir.

Return of antiquities by the Archaeological Survey of India :

The Council understands that as per agreements entered by the State Government with the Government of India, the Archaeological Survey of India had to build an anthropological Museum at Burzehom, which has not been done by them so far. All antiquities, which have been unearthed by the Archaeological Survey of India during the last 30 years have been taken away by them out of the State. The Council demands that the Archaeological Survey of India be requested to establish the promised Museum at Burzehom and return all the antiquities etc unearthed during the last 30 years to our State Museums at Jammu, Srinagar and Delhi.

Encyclopaedia Kashmiriana :

The Council records its appreciation of Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Language and Culture in having started the project of Encyclopaedia Kashmiriana. The Academy, it is hoped, will enlist the co-operation of the council in the compilation of this stupendous work, to make it of such high standard and quality that it would be sought after by scholars of Kashmiriology all over the world.

World Kashmir Conference :

The Council is of opinion that in order to unravel and revitalise our culture, a grand conference be organised in Kashmir every year to which eminent personalities in different fields of Art, Culture and Science pertaining to Kashmir are invited from different parts of the world. It would be in the fitness of things that such a conference is held under non-official auspices. Such a Conference would more appropriately be part of the work KCR and to make a beginning in this behalf and to hold first such conference next Autumn, the State Government are requested to make a grant of Rs. 50,000/-.

Establishment of Department of Sanskrit :

.It is well known that Kashmir formed an important seat of

Sanskrit learning between 7th and 14th century A.D. contribution made by Kashmiries to Sanskrit have attained world fame. It is regretted that upto now, no Department of Sanskrit has been established at the University of Kashmir. The Council demands of the University of Kashmir to establish the Sanskrit Department as early as possible.

Establishment of Department of Arabic :

It is well known that since 13th Century that Kashmiries have contributed a lot to the Arabic literature and such manuscripts are preserved in Archives, Research, and other educational institutions as well as in private hands. It is also a fact that Arabic has attained much importance with the emergence of oil producing West Asian States. As such, it is necessary to establish Arabic Departments in the University of Kashmir. The Council demands that the University of Kashmir take immediate steps to establish such a Department.

Building of City Centre and City Hall :

It is regretted that the municipal Council, Srinagar has not yet built up a city Hall and a Centre in Srinagar. The council demands from the Municipal Council that it takes early steps to build such a City Centre and Hall, with necessary facilities and amenities.

Pension to Scholars :

The Council and its members are committed to channelize their efforts and to devote their time to research and literary work. The Council is ready to help and assist the ministry of Education of the State Government and the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages in framing a detailed scheme for grant of financial assistance and pension to prominent researchers engaged in research and study, in various fields of specialisation. The Council also suggests that research awards and Research Scholarships be instituted by the State Government on regular basis.

Grants to Research Organisations :

The Council urges upon the State Government to initiate action for grant of aid and financial support to various Research Institution and Research Centres in the State. In this connection mention may be made of Shri Parmanand Research Institute, Sharda Peetha Research Centre, Research Centre of Hanfia Arabic College, Jamia Madiuatul Aloom etc.

Centre of Central Asian Studies :

The Council notes with appreciation the establishment of the Centre for Central Asian Studies at the University of Kashmir. The Council would like to extend its full fledged co-operation and support to this Centre in the exploration of past history and culture of Kashmir, its impact and influences on the neighbouring areas and vice-versa. The Council however, feels that all such research work, projects and council of library studies should be got done through local authors and research scholars who should have a controlling hand in such projects and studies. The Council demands that a Board of Local Scholars be constituted to formulate policies and give direction for carrying on various projects in the Centre of central Asian Studies.

Need for Field Scientific Research :

Department of Botany, Chemistry, zoology of the University of Kashmir be prevailed upon to undertake field Scientific Research in flora, fauna, mine, minerals, forest wealth, medical plants and herbs and natural resources, Solar energy, hydraulics etc. with a view to improve our style of life within the resources.

Freedom Fighter's Memorial Hall :

The Council demands of the State Government to approve construction of fire-proof building for housing vestiges of our historic past, photographs of our martyrs and freedom fighters, all material available about them in manuscripts, from our

printed tape-recordings, etc, for use research by posterity. For this purpose, land as well as funds for construction, be made available for building of a Memorial Hall. The Council also requests the State Government to have the precious records available in the Reference and Research Library of the Department of Information, Jammu and Kashmir Government, Srinagar fully utilized by research Scholars for building an authentic history of freedom movement in Kashmir and the events in the State which followed the partition in 1947.

Editing Publication of Manuscripts :

The Department of Archives may, in collaboration with the Cultural Academy, make necessary arrangements of allotting scholars projects for editing, annotation, compilation, translation of treasure of literature in the State Archives at Jammu, Srinagar and Leh in Persian, Sanskrit and Ladakhi. The State Cultural Academy may also take immediate steps to publish the manuscripts of Kashmir including Thufatual-Abhar and Baharistan-i-Shahi which are lying in Archives Library.

Research material with Radio Kashmir, Leh, Jammu and Srinagar :

Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Govt. of India be requested with an appropriate recommendation from the State Government to place at the disposal of Kashmir Council of Research copies of texts- transcripts and the tape recorded version of talks, panel discussions and features etc. on art and culture of Kashmir, broadcast from Srinagar. Ladakh and Jammu Stations of Radio Kashmir, for purposes of printing the same in original or in translations for the benefit of the reading public.

Grant-in-aid to Lalded Nundreshi Research Centre :

The State Government, Ministry of Education, may agree to approach the National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO to take up following major research projects in collaboration with Kashmir Council of Research, Archaeological

Survey of India (North west Circle) and other interested International Agencies :—

- a. Magalithic and Neo-lithic period find and excavation at Burzanhom and Hoinar (Pahalgam and similar other excavations) of later periods.
- b. Conducting search of hidden treasure of copper plates containing records of 4th Buddhist Council in Kashmir.

Institution of Chair in Ladakhi :

The University of Kashmir may agree to institute a Chair for Research in Ladakhi art and culture and literature with necessary financial assistance from U.G.C.

Task Force For Implementation of Policy Resolution :

The Council recommends that a Task Force for implementation of this Policy Resolution on research and cultural heritage, be constructed under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister in which the Kashmir Council of Research should be suitably represented.

In pursuance of the above, the Council requests its patron (Chief Minister J. & K.) to use his good offices with the Ministry of Education, Government of India, Department of the State Government and the University of Kashmir, Municipal Council and Cultural Academy for considering the suggestions set forth above.

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